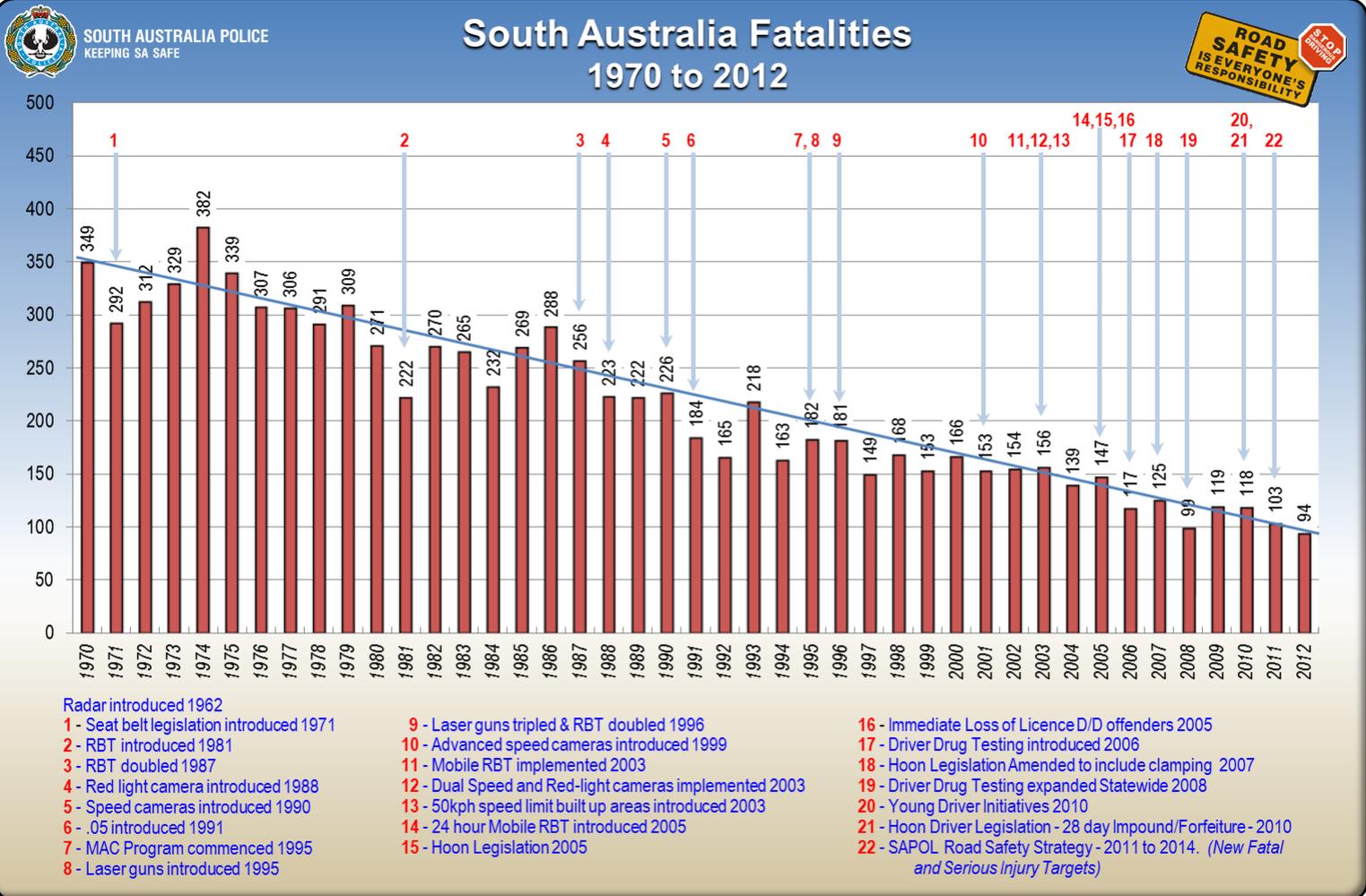




Talkin' Road Safety

SCHOOL EDITION

HOW DO WE DRIVE DOWN THE ROAD TOLL?



We have been asked about the significance of a road fatality total under 100? The fatality road toll for 2012 was 94 – 1 person dead for every 4 days of the year (2011 South Australian population about 1,582,559 and there were about 1,259,214 registered vehicles. This 2012 result is 1 death for every 16,835 people). Looking back and putting aside the result in 2008 when the fatality total was 99, the next best result was 67 years ago, in 1946 when 97 people died – 1 person dead for every 3.6 days of the year (South Australian population of 646,216 and there were 100,815 registered vehicles on the road. This 1946 result is 1 death for every 6662 people). This means that by these statistics, you were about 2.5 times less likely to be a fatality in a road crash in 2012 when you compare it to 1946.

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Editor: Senior Sergeant Paul Warren

HOW DO WE DRIVE DOWN THE ROAD TOLL?

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What was Australia like in 1946? Television was 10 years away; we were just out of the Second World War with service personnel finally returning home; there were no Holdens (they didn't appear until 1948) with the vehicles of choice being the likes of a Ford and Chevrolet designed and built in Detroit, USA. Notable births for the year were Australian icons Bon Scott from AC/DC and Molly Meldrum.



1946 Ford Sedan



1946 Chevrolet

When was it the most dangerous to be a road user on South Australian roads? Let's consider the chart and look at the first four years of the 1970's (with fatalities totalling 1315 deaths in those years – an average of 328 people dying each year on the road). In 1974, there were 382 deaths on roads – an average of 1 person dead per each day of the year (SA population of 1,195,600 and there were about 572,400 vehicles registered in this year. South Australia's worst ever result meant that there was 1 death for every 3129 people). Statistically, in 1974, you were 5.4 times more likely to be involved in a fatality on the roads than in 2012. Even when compared to 1946 you were 2 times more likely to be involved in a fatal crash in 1974, making it more dangerous on the roads than 28 years previously. Just think about the changes in legislation, technology, road design, vehicle design and medical treatments – all this considered and we still went backwards.

What was Australia like in 1974? It was the era of the big V8 muscle cars when everyone wanted to drive the likes of a Holden Monaro, a Valiant Charger or a Ford Falcon GT. 'Countdown' started on ABC television; Band on the Run by Paul McCartney and Wings was the top selling album of the year; Cyclone Tracy devastated Darwin; Leonardo DiCaprio, Kate Moss, Robbie Williams, Christian Bale and Ricky Ponting were notable births; and the first Bankcards were introduced.



1974 Monaro – 'football, meat pies, kangaroos and Holden cars'



1974 Chrysler Charger – 'Hey Charger!'



1974 Ford GT Falcon

A vibrant year but the situation on South Australian roads could not be allowed to continue and there was great motivation to do something about this road carnage.

The 1970s win this rather dubious award as the most dangerous decade on South Australian roads.

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Since those years, we have introduced a number of treatments and as with all things you cannot take one issue out as having the desired affect – it will always be a combination of them.

The United Nations recognise this concept in their 'Decade of Action for Road Safety 2010-2020' and have adopted the Safe Systems approach to Road Safety (Safe roads, safe vehicles, safe speeds and safe people). Engineering involving better roads, better vehicles and better medical treatment/technology occurs over time with these areas all contributing to lowering the road toll. The chart highlights the actions, which were taken by legislation, technology, equipment/instrument issue and programs to treat the problem. The effect of compulsory seat belt use; Random Breath Testing; Motor Accident Commission/SAPOL Road Safety education programs; laser guns; speed and red light cameras; impounding legislation; Driver Drug Testing; immediate loss of licences for drink driving offenders; and young driver initiatives (including the Graduated Licensing Scheme); have all contributed to lowering this total.

One of the issues which become apparent is that all treatments have a use by date and in dealing with human behaviour will have to be adjusted, re-enforced or replaced by new approaches or technologies. South Australia having 94 fatalities on the road in 2012 is a step in the right direction but remember that there are still 94 families grieving these deaths which in most instances were avoidable.

The phrase 'Road Safety is Everyone's Responsibility – STOP dangerous driving' sets the scene for all South Australian road users to think of this when using the road system. Your attitude to your driving will shape what occurs in the future. The challenge ahead is to keep the blue trend line continuing 'Towards Zero Together.'



Click on the picture or go to <http://dpti.sa.gov.au/towardszerotogether/article?item=17>

